Dream Giver

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/11546958.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Overwatch (Video Game)
Relationship:	Jesse McCree/Hanzo Shimada
Character:	Genji Shimada
Additional Tags:	Developing Relationship, Literal Sleeping Together, Watching Someone Sleep, Eventual Romance, Fluff and Hurt/Comfort, Rating May Change, I Will Go Down With This Ship, Tooth-Rotting Fluff, Genji Shimada is a Little Shit
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2017-07-19 Completed: 2017-08-03 Words: 6,545 Chapters: 2/2

Dream Giver

by UrsaMajorStories

Summary

When McCree interrupts his midnight training session, Hanzo rediscovers a part of himself that he often overlooks.

Chapter 1

The obsidian arrowhead glistened in starlight that seeped through the dense canopy of tree leaves. It whizzed through the crisp night air, soon to find itself lodged deeply in the bark of a steadfast sycamore. A sharp *thwap* reverberated through the still woodland. The arrow had pierced the robust trunk as if it were as delicate as human flesh.

Another was swiftly drawn from the quiver on the archer's back, and fired in a similar fashion. Soaring like a bird of prey, it had landed centimeters away from the first arrow, creating the unsavory sound of obsidian arrowheads scraping together. The corners of the archer's lips were drawn downward in a discontented frown. He had meant for it to split the previous arrow down the center.

The warrior pulled his next arrow from his supply. Wooden arrow shafts clinked together softly, making the stoic man furrow his brow. Every sound seemed amplified and out of place. It was too quiet here.

From the moment he set foot in this village, something deep inside of his chest became restless. The winds whistled and moaned strange tunes of another land. He did not know them, but they seemed familiar. Throughout the day, pulsating breezes seemed to whip around him, assailing his ears with haunting melodies he did not wish to hear. Tonight, they were absent.

The bow string was pulled taught once more, releasing to set another deadly projectile free. It zipped directly in between the previous two, sandwiching itself betwixt its kin, much to the dismay of the bow man. He was off his mark by a fraction of an inch, which was odd, infuriating even. This was a simple, stationary target, and he couldn't splice his own arrows? Something was off. Dangerously *off*.

Perhaps he was overthinking this. He was distracted by his own mind, and he made errors as a result. Frustrated, he shook his head at himself. Under his breath, he grumbled, "This is foolish."

It was the middle of the night, yet he couldn't sleep. Rough nights were not uncommon to him, but he valued the time he had to rest. He had never willingly got up out of bed to have target practice. A strange sensation compelled him to move, something profound in the marrow of his bones.

He didn't like this situation. The town seemed innocent enough, but it unsettled him, to the point where he had to pull a midnight training session to calm his spiked nerves. On top of that, he wasn't fond of the people he was here with. His brother was a nuisance, at least a good majority of the time. He had an unbelievable energy that overwhelmed his withdrawn sibling. Just like a younger brother would, the swordsman would purposely find a way to push the elder's buttons. Like an elder brother would, the archer hated it. They worked well together, though, even if they had frequent quarrels.

Then, there was the cowboy. He had a subtle vibrancy about him, and a smile that was half charming, half irritating. Their initial meeting was a few months earlier, and it wasn't exactly pleasant. This morning was the first time they had seen each other since then, and the gunslinger barely said a word to him. The archer wasn't sure if he would work well with him, but Overwatch insisted their skills would complement each other.

Without thinking, he grabbed another arrow and prepared to fire, shoving his frenzied thoughts to the side. If he carried on like this, he would only keep himself awake longer. The bowstring snapped, sending his arrow arching gracefully towards the battered tree. This time, the weapon smacked just above the growing horde of arrows.

Before the man could express his discontent, the gentle crunching of grass caught his attention. Casual, conspicuous footfall sounded directly behind the archer. The noise was soft but obvious, like the intruder wanted him to know he was coming. The warrior turned with an arrow pulled poised like a flash of lighting, ready to ignite if the steps continued.

They paused. Instead, a voice drawled, "Why wasn't I invited to the party, Mr. Shimada?"

Hanzo rolled his eyes at the figure emerging from the shade of the forestry. The cowboy stared at him, clad in a pair of black sweatpants and a light gray t-shirt. His feet were bare. It looked as if he had rolled out of bed without even bothering to put on shoes.

The archer sneered, rotating back towards the impaled tree, "Why do you think, cowboy?"

The cowboy crossed his arms in front of his chest, "Now, I don't mind nicknames, but I don't mind being called Jesse either."

Hanzo prepped his bow for another shot as he muttered, "How did you find me?"

"When you choose a location as quiet as this for target practice, the sound of arrows can make quite the racket," Jesse rested half of his body on the closest tree trunk, crossing his feet by the ankles. He observed the perfect posture of his partner as he stretched the bow string to its limit with impeccable strength. Hanzo merely grunted a reply. His fingertips were just about to release the arrow when Jesse spoke again, "I'd like to learn some archery sometime, if you'd be willin' to teach."

Hanzo's grasp of the arrow slipped as he registered what his partner said. Him? Teach the *cowboy*? The thought amused him. It was not an easy skill to master.

Jesse whistled as they both watched the projectile crash into the thick canopy above them. It fell at the archer's feet with a dull thump; the shaft cracked in the middle. The amusement Hanzo felt was gone, replaced by aggravation. He clenched his fists, punctuating his words with blunt precision, "I don't have time for this useless chatter, McCree."

"Hold on there, snapdragon. Do you count *all* conversation as useless chatter?" McCree held up his hands, startled by the sudden anger radiating off the tattooed agent.

Hanzo pursed his lips as he scooped up his injured arrow, "No, just the ones I have with you."

Jesse sighed, barely containing his own frustration, “Look, partner. I don’t have to be on this mission. You an’ Genji could do just fine by yourselves. Want me to leave?”

“I never said that—”

The cowboy cut him off, “No, ya didn’t. But ever since we met, you’ve avoided me like the goddamn plague! Am I really that much of a fool to you?”

Hanzo inhaled, urging himself to control his temper. There was no reason for this. The rage was coming from somewhere else, and he didn’t need to take it out on his partner. His facial expression softened as he started over, “I am sorry, Jesse. I am having a rough night.”

“I figured,” Jesse flopped down at the base of the tree he leaned on, bringing his knees up to rest his elbows on them.

The Shimada raised an eyebrow at his fellow Overwatch operative while he began to pull his weapons out of the battered sycamore, “Are you having one, too?”

McCree sighed, “I always do.”

“What do you mean?” Hanzo questioned, forcefully yanking arrows out of the bark one by one.

Jesse laughed at himself, “I’m what you call a grade-A insomniac.”

“You weren’t asleep?” Hanzo’s ears perked up upon hearing the medical term.

“Not at all. That’s why I’m out here. I heard you tumble out of bed to get dressed. I guess I just assumed something was wrong. I got worried,” Jesse closed his eyes, letting his head fall back on the tree truck that supported him.

Hanzo looked over his shoulder at his counterpart, surprised by his concern, “Oh…sorry for disturbing you…”

After that, nothing was said between them for a while. The only sound was the slight pop of the arrowheads being wrenched out of the wood. Each one was neatly positioned back into the silver holster attached to Hanzo’s back. Eventually, the archer made his way to Mcree, choosing to sit beside him as he shared his thoughts, “When I first met you, I thought you were a smug son-of-a-bitch.”

McCree snorted, “And I thought you were a stone-cold asshole, but at least I *attempted* to be friendly.”

Hanzo breathed, “Just listen, fool. I thought you were full of yourself, and used to people who were easily charmed by your social graces. I suppose I wanted to show you that charm doesn’t work on everyone.”

“Not if you give up, it don’t,” Jesse hooted with a smirk.

“Forget it. What I’m trying to say is going right over your inflated head,” Hanzo huffed in exasperation. Of course the lumbering cowboy wouldn’t get it. The warrior didn’t even understand it himself.

“Naw, darlin’. You just want me to *earn* your friendship,” A sincere smile adorned the cowboy’s features. He looked cheerfully at the archer beside him, waiting to see if he had grasped the meaning of his words. Wide brown eyes stared back at him, either astounded or confused. Jesse couldn’t tell.

His confidence dwindled as he scratched the back of his head, “Maybe it did go over my head.”

Something clicked in the back of the Shimada’s mind, “No, Jesse. You understood.”

The cowboy had figured him out. His friendship was not something that was freely given away. Relationships were sacred to him, especially after he thought he lost his brother. He shielded himself from people until he had almost forgotten how to make friends. Even now, with the Overwatch recall, the agents he associated with were merely acquaintances to him.

He didn’t realize he had criteria for friendship, but somehow the cowboy knew.

The steady southern twang of McCree’s voice brought Hanzo out of his thoughts, “So, how do I do that?”

“I’m sorry?” The dragon wielder’s brows creased.

McCree’s inflection carried an earnest, simple tone, “How do I earn your friendship?”

Hanzo chuckled heartily, “I’m afraid I do not know. Friendship has never been a strength of mine.”

“Well, I’ll just have to figure it out then, huh,” Determination glinted Jesse’s eyes.

“I suppose so,” The archer sighed in content, taking a full breath for the first time that night. He began to appreciate the gunslinger’s company.

Out of the corner of his eye, Hanzo caught a glimpse of something white. A bundle of small, snowy flowers flourished a little way from where the two men sat. Their stalks were about eye level with the Shimada, and he recognized what they were immediately. He swiftly heaved himself to his feet and sauntered over to the patch of flora. Digging into the earth around it, he displaced the plant from the soil, ensuring that the root remained intact. McCree stood and eyed him warily, until he saw that the man had picked flowers. Then, he smiled a shit-eating grin, “Aw, for me, darlin’?”

“Yes, but not in the way you are thinking,” Hanzo strolled past the cowboy, his expression neutral. He started heading towards the edges of the forest. Jesse followed, unsure of what to expect.

His curiosity was peaked, “What are you planning?”

The Shimada replied in vague terms, “A solution to your sleep problem.”

Comfortable silence enveloped them as they walked along a long-forgotten path. Hanzo realized his anxieties about the environment were quieted. His mind could focus, and his thoughts were no longer tumbling around his brain with frenzied panic. Whatever had bothered him before had disappeared, for now.

Finally, the trees parted, exposing a small meadow with a cozy-looking cabin placed in the middle. The three fighters had rented it for the duration of their stay. The renter took one look at them and had lowered the price until it was practically free. He must’ve known why they were here.

McCree took out his personal key and slowly propped the door open, careful not to wake a potentially sleeping Genji. Hanzo noticed this and reassured him, “Do not worry about Genji. He sleeps deeply.”

The cowboy shrugged as he ambled into the room, “Whatever you say. He’s your brother.”

The downstairs consisted of a quaint living room on the left side and a rather modern kitchen on the right. The back wall held the stairs to the upper floor, with three bedrooms, a bathroom, and an extra room that seemed to be used as an office. It may have been smaller than what the three men were used to, but they made due. The seclusion from the village was that they needed, and it was the biggest perk about the cabin.

Hanzo placed the budding plant on the marble kitchen countertop, then riffled through the various cabinets and drawers, searching for cooking utensils. Jesse watched the man, amused by his desperate search for god-knows-what, “Need some help there, partner?”

“No, just go sit on the couch over there and relax,” Hanzo calmly commanded. Sighing, Jesse obeyed. He slumped onto the couch facing away from the kitchen space, staring at the little fireplace in front of him. *Would be nice if it were lit*, the cowboy thought to himself.

The clattering of pots and pans made him jump, “You sure you’re alright?”

A voice responded from behind the counter, “Yes. Just not used to this set up.”

Jesse tried in vain to suppress his laughter as he turned around, “You better tell me what you’re doing, before I go thinkin’ that you’re tryin’ to poison me.”

Hanzo popped up, triumphantly holding a pot, a small bowl, and a mixing spoon, “When Genji and I were young boys, we would have trouble sleeping. We wanted to stay up and roughhouse with each other. However, our mother thought sleep was the most important function the body preformed. So, on nights we would refuse to go to bed, she would make us tea from this.”

He picked up the plant and held it in front of him so Jesse could see, “This is a Valerian plant. Its roots hold a natural sedative that can help with conditions like insomnia. My brother and I would drink small cups of tea made from it until our restlessness at night stopped. I think this could help you too.”

As he explained, Hanzo gently washed the roots and picked them off the stem. They were then gathered in the small bowl with water and mashed with the mixing spoon.

Jesse pipped up from the couch, “I dunno, Hanzo. I’ve tried a lot of things…”

Hanzo began filling the pot with tap water, “Have you tried this?”

“No, but—”

“Then be quiet,” The Shimada switched the stove on with a small flare and left the pot on it to boil. He added the crushed roots to the mixture, and took a step back to wait. McCree peered inquisitively at the introverted archer. Earlier that day, he swore Hanzo hated his guts, and now Hanzo was offering home remedies to help cure him of sleeplessness.

McCree couldn’t hide the confusion in his voice, “Why are you being so nice all of a sudden?”

Hanzo crossed his arms, “I wouldn’t exactly call making tea *nice*.”

McCree searched for the right word, “Well, it’s…*civil*.”

“I’m trying, alright?” Hanzo scowled at the water as it started to bubble, “I saw a solution to your problem, so why not fix it?”

“Can’t argue with that,” Jesse sat back onto the couch, deciding not to push it any further. Getting a guarded person to open up was a delicate business. One wrong sentence, one wrong word could close them back up to the world. And, all Jesse wanted was to get to know the guy.

Sure enough, a steaming cup of herbal tea was offered to him not a few minutes later. Jesse hesitantly took the ceramic teacup in his hands, “Now, you’re sure it’ll help?”

“Fairly sure. It will not hurt to try,” Hanzo confirmed as he settled himself next to the cowboy.

Jesse nodded, “Thank you, Hanzo.”

The archer smiled.

The cowboy took a sip of the dark amber liquid, startled by the sweet taste. He certainly wasn’t a tea drinker, but this stuff wasn’t half bad. As he continued to drink, he asked, “How long does it take for this to kick in?”

Hanzo’s eyes widened, realizing that Jesse should’ve been in bed, “It is fast acting.”

“Well, shoot,” McCree snickered, “I guess it’s the couch for me tonight.”

“I wish I had remembered sooner…” Hanzo pinched the bridge of his nose with his thumb and forefinger, feeling utterly stupid.

“Don’t beat yourself up about it, darlin’. It’s alright,” A gentle hand rested on the tattoos adorning Hanzo’s shoulder. There was already a slight slur to the gunslinger’s speech. The look in his eyes were soft and dreamy; his eyelids fluttered helplessly. Hanzo took the cup away from him. He had clearly had enough.

He began to sway a bit, and Hanzo wrapped an arm around his shoulders, “I’ve got you.”

The only warning Hanzo got was the release of Jesse’s tense muscles before the man collapsed onto his lap. Two arms were now wrapped around McCree’s heavy form, turning him so that he was laying on his back. His head was cradled by Hanzo’s well-developed thighs. Hanzo was surprised to see that Jesse’s eyes were still half-open. He whimpered, “I’m sorry, darlin.”

The Shimada lowered his voice, whispering soothingly, “Shhhh, It’s ok. The herb is powerful.”

“Will you stay?” Jesse pleaded weakly as he fought to stay conscious. His tone gave Hanzo the impression the he was afraid to sleep alone.

“Yes…” Warm fingers caressed Jesse’s chestnut hair, eliciting a soft sigh from the drowsy man. His eyelids drooped lower, yet he still seemed reluctant to give in.

Hanzo coaxed him with tender words, continuing to run his fingers across his sensitive scalp, “I’m here…you can sleep…”

Jesse’s eyelids calmly slipped closed as his breathing slowed. Sleep took him from the waking world, to where he could finally have peace. Hanzo watched as his partner drifted away. Apparently, he had a capacity for compassion that he didn’t know about. What was it about the cowboy that made him act so *differently*?

The tranquility that graced Jesse’s features made something in his chest throb painfully. He had undoubtedly developed a soft spot for the man in a few short hours. Or, perhaps, it was always there.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Trickles of white light drenched the room, casting lazy shadows on the couch. His mind regained consciousness, but his eyelids refused to open. Everything about the way his body was laying was unusual for him. Never in his life had he fallen asleep sitting up. His neck was stretched back, his head resting on something hard. The muscles surrounding his upper back and shoulders were throbbing, stiff from the lack of support. He couldn't remember where he was.

Not until he became aware of the slight movement under his right hand, methodically rising up and down. A light pulse accompanied the motion, sure and steady. The rhythm it created under his palm nearly soothed him back to sleep, but the sound of faint sighing caught his attention.

Hanzo forced his heavy eyelids open, trying to dispel the disorienting fog of sleep. He winced as he gradually lifted his head, his muscles taut with distress. *What the hell happened?*

Looking downward, he jumped a little in shock. He had forgotten that he had not fallen asleep alone. Jesse was still contently slumbering, his cheek slightly nuzzling into Hanzo's lap. The assassin noticed that his right hand was splayed out protectively over the cowboy's chest, while his left was tangled in locks of auburn hair. As he gazed at his sleeping teammate, he relaxed. Jesse had slept through the night.

The moment of tranquility passed when he saw a plush red blanket sprawled over Jesse's body, up to his forearms. Hanzo looked to his right, discovering that his own shoulders were wrapped in a similar blue blanket. He was thankful for the gesture, but that meant someone else had woken up before him.

An enthusiastic voice rang out from behind him, "Good morning, Brother!"

Hanzo turned around to see his biotic goof of a brother pan frying something in a frilly, pink apron with *My Stove is Hotter Than Yours* printed in white, curly-cue letters on the front. The Valerian flower was placed on the counter, just in front of him, in a spotless crystal vase. Genji slightly shimmied to the music playing in his head as he flipped over whatever was in the pan. He may have had metal mechanisms for a face, but he could always emote rather clearly. Now, he seemed excited as all hell, "I was hoping you would wake soon."

The elder brother groaned, choosing to delay the inevitable, "Where did you get that ridiculous thing?"

Genji glanced at his apron and eyed his brother with a proud expression, "This? I found it in one of the cupboards. I think it suits me."

“I suppose you’re allowed to be a fool in the kitchen,” Hanzo grumbled.

“I am what I am, brother,” Genji happily retorted.

Hanzo grunted, “Don’t make it a habit.”

Genji responded with an overdramatic flare, gasping with feigned astonishment, “What? You don’t like my cooking?”

“Just don’t be foolish on the mission, Genji. You could endanger us all,” Hanzo snapped, his usual moodiness settling back into his demeanor.

“Or more importantly, I could accidently endanger *McCree*, right?” If Genji had eyebrows, one would be raised.

Hanzo turned away from him, refusing play into his brother’s tactics. Instead, he focused on the steady breathing of the sleeping cowboy. His breaths were small, almost undetectable. Not at all what Hanzo had expected. Each inhale seemed tentative, the exhale soft. Not once did he snore.

The assassin closed his eyes, spellbound by the gentle rise and fall.

Genji lowered his voice, recognizing his brother’s silent concentration, “You both looked chilled, so I got you some blankets.”

“Hm,” Hanzo murmured in approval as he sensed the beat of Jesse’s heart. It was calm, deliberate. The restless gunslinger had fallen into such a perfect peace, it seemed to radiate from his body, washing over Hanzo with restful allure.

The sizzle of the stove and clanking of dishes intermixed with Genji’s careful questioning, “Is that flower a Valerian?”

“Yes,” Hanzo sighed, still as calm as ever. He could tell that his brother was trying to go about it delicately, and he couldn’t find it in himself to be mad at him.

Genji continued, encouraged by the passive tone of Hanzo’s voice, “You know, mother used to make us tea made from the roots of Valerian.”

“Right, I used to watch her while she did,” Hanzo replied, beginning to sync his breathing with Jesse’s.

“So, you do know how to make it.”

The archer could tell that his brother was trying hard to seem nonchalant, “Genji, there is no need to hustle me. I made it last night for Jesse.”

Genji almost dropped the pan he was holding, “Why?”

“He couldn’t sleep.”

“But brother, how did you come to know this? What were you doing up? Why is one of you fully dressed and the other in sleepwear?” Genji’s sentences began to run together as he anxiously probed the elder.

The reply was dismissive, “Must you make this a game of twenty questions? The story is too long for explanation.”

“I knew the answers wouldn’t come that easily,” Genji respired, untying the apron from his neck and waist while clicking the stove off. His robotic feet knocked against the wood floor as he walked to the front of the couch. He sat himself down with his legs crisscrossed in front of his brother, his neon green eye plate darkening with intensity, “Shorten it.”

The assassin opened his eyes, wishing that this conversation had never started. He had the perfect opportunity to meditate, and Genji couldn’t stop playing detective. Grumbling, Hanzo complied, “Fine. I couldn’t sleep, so I went to the forest beyond the cabin to train. Jesse heard me leave, and he chose to follow. He interrupted my target practice, and I nearly shot him.”

“Well, you clearly didn’t,” Genji chuckled.

“No.”

“So, what happened?”

“We bickered, then talked.”

“This would go faster if you’d explain with more than just one sentence.”

Hanzo sighed, “He revealed to me that he had insomnia, and then I found the Valerian. Training was not going well for me, anyways, so we came back here and—”

“You…made mother’s tea?” The pieces were gradually connecting in Genji’s mind.

“It seemed to be the best solution,” Hanzo stated coolly.

Genji’s facial circuits brightened as he giggled, “Are you sure that was all it was?”

Hanzo pursed his lips, “What are you saying?”

“You seem to forget the spiritual properties of Valerian,” Genji laughed in a teasing manner. His brother watched him, narrowing his eyes, “Why would that matter?”

“It is strongly tied to protection…and love,” Genji wiggled his shoulders a bit suggestively, since he couldn’t do so with eyebrows.

“You are making false assumptions,” Hanzo snapped.

“No. I’m simply looking at what’s in front of me. You’ve even started to call him Jesse!”

“First names are nothing to get excited about.”

“Just look at the way you’re holding him, brother,” Genji gestured towards the tender hands placed on the gunslinger’s chest and in his hair, “You haven’t moved your hands since you woke.”

The tone of Hanzo’s response became defensive, “I do not wish to wake him.”

“When was the last time he slept?”

“I did not ask.”

“He struggles with insomnia?”

“That is what he said.”

“Then I would not worry about waking him.”

“The herb is not *that* strong.”

“No, but it will keep him unconscious until his body is fully rested. It is most likely safe to move. You could probably get up from the couch, if you wish.”

Hanzo remained seated.

“Ah, but you do *not* wish,” Genji giggled.

His brother shook his head, “I promised him I would stay.”

“Don’t worry, brother. Your secret is safe with me.”

“That secret is nonexistent.”

Genji paused, looking at his brother with a curious tilt of his head. Skeptically, he studied his brother’s face. He knew his brother lied, “I know why you avoided the cowboy, Hanzo.”

“I told you *that*, I believed he was an arrogant charmer.”

“And *you* were afraid to let him charm you.”

“That’s not—”

“Admit it, Hanzo, you *feel something* around him. I saw that emotional barrier of yours crack the moment you met him. You tried to patch it up by dodging him at all costs.”

“Genji, stop—”

“Jesse could break your walls easily, brother, and you know it.”

“Genji—”

“But you’re afraid to get close because you might lose him.”

Hanzo snarled, “That’s enough, Genji.”

“Was that too close to the truth?”

“He has to earn my friendship, you fool.”

“Is it really just friendship we’re talking about?”

“Genji, I swear to the great ancestor above—”

“It was a *joke*. Believe me, friendship is a great place to start.”

“Why are *you* so insistent?”

“Just…think about it.”

“Then stop talking and let me,” The Dragon of the South muttered.

The Dragon of the North resumed his role as chef as he returned to the cooled stove and donned his lacey apron. He conceded to the elder’s demands, only after he added one last piece of truth, “I’m not the only person in the world worth trusting.”

Hanzo gazed down at the man lying in his lap, observing the way his jaw slackened, creating a slight part in his lips. His eyes closed as he searched for the odd tranquility that possessed him not moments before. Immediately, he could feel himself being drawn into a peaceful trance as he listened to Jesse’s rhythmic breath. Every heartbeat pulsing in a restful cadence pulled him deeper. Without thinking, he started to caress strands of ginger hair with his fingertips, slowly in time with the cowboy’s sighs. He became aware of each subtle movement Jesse made. It felt so natural, and right.

Overwatch had made the right decision to put them together. They were complementary opposites with harmonizing skills, and perhaps some common ground. But, would it be the right decision to forge a friendship? Soldiers, fighters, warriors from all around the world under Overwatch have met untimely deaths. Each mission was another gamble with life. However, a good majority survive. It could work out, if they protected each other. It was hard to say for sure, though. Everyone around him seemed to die, either by his own hand or by the hands of others.

The assassin was shaken from his meditative state when Jesse’s breath hitched abruptly. His eyes snapped open to see the gunslinger’s face scrunched in distress, and his once limp body beginning to fidget under his red blanket. A small whine ushered past his lips, “Hanzo…”

Hanzo’s heart skipped several beats upon hearing his name. More tears streamed down Jesse’s reddened cheeks as he started gasping frantically.

“What is wrong, brother?” Genji’s voice pipped up from over the kitchen counter, cracking with concern.

Hanzo’s eyes widened with realization, “He’s having a nightmare.”

Swiftly, the blanket covering McCree was yanked away. Fingers tightened into fists. Small tremors shifted up and down the cowboy's body. It looked like he was trying to stifle a sob. Hanzo called out to him, encompassing one of his clenched hands in his, "Jesse, wake up."

When Jesse's erratic breathing increased in intensity, Hanzo instinctually scooped the man into his arms, bringing him close to his chest. A blood curdling cry tore through McCree's throat.

No…No…

"Jesse, whatever it is, it is not real. You're here with me. I am real," Hanzo whispered forcefully in his partner's ear, trying to bring him into consciousness. Tears dripped heavily onto the fabric of his tunic, and he couldn't help but feel responsible for the man's pain. The tea may have trapped him in his sleep, with a nightmare real enough to make him weep. Hanzo sensed a knot in his throat, and strained not to weep himself. He started to rock Jesse back and forth, hoping it would ease him. It seemed to help somewhat, but the nightmare continued to torment him.

Tightening his grip on the cowboy, he murmured again with finality, "I am here."

If the nightmare was going to persist, then Hanzo was going to stay. He was going to hold his partner tight, and keep his promise.

Little by little, the sobs turned to sniffles, and the sniffles to gasps of air. Jesse eyes flickered open as he sat wheezing against Hanzo's figure. As soon as he saw his partner's worried expression, he lurched forward and cursed, "Shit…fuck…"

Hanzo gently, but decisively, pulled the younger man back against him, "Jesse, calm down. You're alright."

Jesse squirmed under the weight of the muscular arms surrounding him, "I…I…Fuck, I'm sorry."

"No, *I'm* sorry," Hanzo specified.

The squirming stopped. The cowboy's face contorted in confusion as he looked up at the archer, "Why the hell are you sorry?"

"I did not know…" Hanzo trailed off, distracted by the way Jesse's tears glistened on his skin. It had been years since he had seen someone cry. He had forgotten how upsetting it was. Unsure of himself, the archer carefully brushed his thumb across the cowboy's dampened cheeks.

Jesse seemed startled, but did not pull away. His voice wavered and cracked as he tried to explain, "Well, I shoulda said somethin', but I was hoping it wouldn't happen."

The look of shame that crossed Jesse's face made guilt boil in Hanzo's blood, "I…I did not mean to—"

"Aw, darlin'. This wasn't your fault."

“But—” Hanzo stopped short when Jesse placed his left hand on his shoulder. The metal prosthetic was cool to the touch, and soft enough to feel like actual skin.

“Believe me, that was the best night’s sleep I could’ve had,” Jesse’s eyes bore into Hanzo’s and sparkled for a moment before he attempted to sit up. A dull aching in his chest made it difficult. Hanzo supported his back as he heaved himself forward. Out of the corner of his eye, the gunslinger caught a glimpse of Genji in a frilly pink apron, piling pancake stacks for them on little ceramic plates, “Well, shit. The whole family’s here.”

Hanzo was quick to reassure him, “Don’t mind Genji. He’s been busy making breakfast. I think.”

“Pancakes! Maaaaking Pancakes!” Genji corrected his brother, singing to the high heavens.

McCree chuckled, calling out to the half-omnic, “I see you have the getup for it too.”

Genji sniggered with a wink in his voice, “I think it’s quite flattering. It may look even better if *Hanzo* wore it.”

Hanzo rolled his eyes, but started to flush red when the cowboy chortled, “Ha! Now that would be something.”

Jesse looked over at his silent partner, scratching the back of his head nervously, “I should get dressed.”

“Ah…um…right,” Hanzo’s stone expression faltered.

McCree warily stood up, balancing himself on the wood floorboards. He then sauntered towards the staircase to the upstairs bedrooms. Over his shoulder he shouted, “Don’t let Hanzo eat all the pancakes before I get back.”

“No promises,” Genji yelled back.

The two brothers watched the cowboy ascend to the second floor. As soon as Jesse was out of earshot, the younger squealed, “Holy shit, brother!”

“Don’t. Speak.”

Genji considered Hanzo’s command, but ultimately disregarded it, “You really *do* care for the cowboy, don’t you?”

“What did I just say!?” Hanzo howled as he leaped over the couch, ready to punch his brother’s lights out.

Unphased, Genji taunted him, “Oh sure, raise your voice a little louder. I’m sure your *partner* would be interested in our discussion.”

Hanzo lunged across the countertop and grabbed him by the front of his apron, “Shut up. There is no discussion.”

“Fine, just ignore me like you ignore your feelings.”

Frustration lined Hanzo’s inflection as he loosened his grip, “Genji, I don’t know what I feel.”

Genji huffed, “That’s fair.”

“Then drop it,” Hanzo’s hand fell away.

“But I am your brother. This is what brothers do.”

From the top of the stairway, Jesse hollered, “Y’all talkin’ shit?”

“No, just…uh…recapping the mission details!” The young samurai stuttered. Hanzo rubbed his temples, irritated by Genji’s less-than-convincing fib.

The thud of heavy leather boots echoed down the stairs until the six-foot-tall cowboy was fully visible at the bottom. His shoulders were draped in his signature oversized, red scarf. His BAMF belt buckle gleamed as he hooked his thumb in a belt loop. His hat as slightly tilted forward, shadowing his facial features. He looked ready for a fight. Hanzo stared, *That was fast*.

Slanting his hat back, McCree gave the two siblings a unconvinced, “Uh huh.”

The brothers said nothing, so Jesse added, “Well, would ya mind letting me in on them too?”

Two plates bursting with pancakes were slapped onto the countertop, “First, we feast!”

Hanzo exhaled, letting the steam of his annoyance rush out. Genji was not the best at diversionary tactics.

The three stood around the counter, Genji watching the other two eagerly to see what they would think of his culinary experiment. It was the first time he made something other than cereal or scrambled eggs. McCree was the first to take a bite, and his face lit up, “Well, shoot. Why didn’t you make breakfast when we were in Blackwatch?”

Genji snorted, “Do you think they would’ve let me touch a stove back then?”

“Naw, you’re right. Blackwatch would’ve ended in flames sooner if you did,” McCree smiled.

Hanzo slowly inched his plate towards himself as the old teammates chatted. He was not fond of this dish, but would eat it to please his brother.

They sat and ate like old friends, maybe even a family. The table talk was handled mostly by the gunslinger and samurai, but at times the archer would add a small comment. This system seemed please everyone. Eventually, Genji started to divulge the mission specifics, “McCree, you’ll be our front man, directly confronting the target. Hanzo and I will have eyes on the targets as well, backing you up from the side and above. The Talon agents should be arriving

in five hours, which should be enough time to prepare specific tactics and evacuate the civilians."

Hanzo chimed in, "We also have some of the town's men willing to fight alongside us. I am not sure if they have been trained in combat, but I can remedy that. We'll need all the help we can get."

McCree approved, "They have a right to protect what's theirs."

"They are certainly proud of their town," Genji hummed.

The hair on the back of Hanzo's neck prickled as he remembered the odd feelings he had concerning the town. He spoke up, louder than he had since they started to eat, "About the town. I want you both to be on guard when we're in it."

"Why's that?" McCree questioned.

Hanzo closed his eyes. It may have been an overreaction, but it was better to be safe than sorry, "There is something strange about it."

McCree crossed his arms, "Now that you mention it, I'm not sure I like the way these folks have been eyeing us."

Genji nodded, "I agree."

"Then I suggest we proceed with caution," Hanzo confirmed.

"Well, how about I scout ahead?" Genji chirped.

Hanzo quipped, "That's not necessary."

"Ohoho! but it is," Genji danced around the counter to where his brother stood, whispering so only his ears could hear, "If you cannot tell I am winking, brother."

"Genji!" Hanzo screeched and swiped at his sibling, but Genji twirled away.

"I'll make sure the path to town is clear of threats, then you two can follow me," The swordaman practically skipped to the door. Both of his teammates could tell he was smiling under his mechanic mask.

"Or we could follow you now," Hanzo disputed.

"Give me a minute head-start, brother," He darted out the door faster than Hanzo could protest.

McCree whistled, "He's a fast, little bugger, ain't he."

"Hm," Hanzo grumbled, resting his forehead in his hand.

"Hanzo?" The puppy-dog quality of Jesse's voice made him look up.

“I may not be your friend yet, but you sure as hell are mine.”

The cowboy beamed wholeheartedly, meaning every word he said.

Shades of pink bloomed like summer roses across the archer’s cheekbones. The edges of his heart began to melt.

Hanzo glanced down at the counter to avoid the cowboy’s stare.

Fuck.

Jesse appeared to be a shallow casanova on the outside, but there was something else about him that no one gave him credit for. There was understanding and compassion hidden underneath that wide-brimmed hat, shinning in his eyes. It was no wonder as to why he could make friends so effortlessly. Not only was he charming, but he had authentic empathy. The first time they shook hands, Hanzo saw it, and felt like he could tell him anything. And, he could see it now. It scared him shitless.

“You alright there, darlin’?”

Hanzo nodded, afraid of what he might say if he spoke.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading! Comments are greatly appreciated :) Should I continue?

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!